

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SY-05 SCS-06 CA-01 OC-06 CCO-00
OPR-02 A-01 HA-05 PPT-01 SNM-05 DEAE-00 /121 W
-----033113 230737Z /11

R 230327Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9177
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 5910

PARIS: FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC, ASEC, CARR, PINR, SNAR, AF
SUBJECT: CALL ON INTERIOR MINISTER WATANJAR

1. ON JULY 20, I PAID MY INITIAL COURTESY CALL ON
MINISTER OF INTERIOR MOHAMMAD ASLAM WATANJAR, WHO WAS RECENTLY
SHIFTED FROM THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS TO THIS POST.
(MAJOR WATANJAR, ONE OF THE FEW MILITARY OFFICERS IN THE CABINET,
LOST HIS ADDITIONAL RANK OF DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE SHIFT.)
WATANJAR PROFESSED TO KNOW NO ENGLISH; THEREFORE, SA'ID AHMAD,
THE MINISTRY'S PRESIDENT OF INSPECTIONS, SERVED AS INTERPRETER.

2. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS, WATANJAR MADE THE FOLLOWING
POINTS:

(A) SPECIAL SECURITY NEEDS OF THE US MISSION: WATANJAR AGREED
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THAT THE EMBASSY'S ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AND SECURITY OFFICER
COULD CONTINUE, AS BEFORE THE APRIL 27 REVOLUTION, TO MAINTAIN
WORKING CONTACT WITH THE COMMANDANT OF POLICE AND OTHER
APPROPRIATE INTERIOR OFFICIALS ON MATTERS INVOLVING THE SAFETY
OF U.S. PERSONNEL AND THE PROTECTION OF U.S. INSTALLATIONS.
HE ASSURED US OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO PROTECT ALL
FOREIGNERS (A RESPONSIBILITY, INCIDENTALLY, WHICH WATANJAR CARRIED

OUT WELL WHEN HE LED THE REBEL TANK FORCES DURING THE REVOLUTION).

(B) RIGHTS OF ARRESTED AMERICANS: WHEN TOLD THAT THE NOW RELEASED US CITIZEN SAMUEL SLOAN (KABUL 5878) HAD BEEN HELD BY AFGHAN AUTHORITIES FOR THREE WEEKS WITHOUT BEING INFORMED ABOUT THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM OR BEING PERMITTED TO CONTACT AN AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICER, WATANJAR ATTRIBUTED THIS INCIDENT TO THE INEXPERIENCE OF THE NEW AFGHAN SECURITY FORCES AND ASSURED ME THAT HIS GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO OBSERVE FULLY IN THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO OBSERVE FULLY IN THE FUTURE THE TERMS OF THE VIENNA CONSULAR CONVENTION, WHICH I HAD CALLED TO HIS ATTENTION.

(C) PASSPORTS AND EXIT VISAS FOR THE AMERICAN WIVES OF AFGHAN CITIZENS: WATANJAR NOTED MY EXPLANATION THAT THERE ARE OFTEN COMPASSIONATE FAMILY REASONS WHY THE AMERICAN WIVES OF AFGHAN CITIZENS SHOULD BE PERMITTED, WITH THEIR CHILDREN, TO VISIT THEIR AMERICAN PARENTS, BUT HE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE VISIBLY MOVED OR SYMPATHETIC. HE TERSELY RECOMMENDED THAT SUCH WIVES (WHO ARE REGARDED AS AFGHAN CITIZENS BY THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT) APPLY TO HIS MINISTRY'S PASSPORT OFFICE FOR THE NECESSARY TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION. (COMMENT: BECAUSE THIS VERY OFFICE HAS PROVED A ROADBLOCK THUS FAR FOR THE WOMEN INVOLVED, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO RELAX ITS HIGHLY RESTRICTIVE EXIT-CONTROL POLICY AT THIS TIME. THE CASES OF THESE WIVES ARE USUALLY CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CURRENT STATUS OF THEIR AFGHAN HUSBANDS, MOST OF WHOM ARE ON SHAKY GROUND WITH THE NEW REGIME. CONFIDENTIAL

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END OF COMMENT)

(D) COMBATTING ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFIC: WATANJAR STATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN ILLICIT NARCOTICS -- BUT WITH LESS ENTHUSIASM THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, NOOR AHMAD NOOR. (COMMENT: WATANJAR SHOULD BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THIS PROBLEM SINCE HE COMES FROM THE PROVINCE OF PAKTIA, A MAJOR OPIUM PRODUCTION REGION. END OF COMMENT). WHEN TOLD ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY OFFICERS AT THE EMBASSY WHO COULD ASSIST HIS MINISTRY THROUGH THE UN NARCOTICS ADVISOR, WATANJAR WELCOMED WHATEVER HELP DEA MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE -- BUT SPECIFIED THAT IT MUST BE THROUGH UN AUSPICES.

4. ADDITIONAL BIOGRAPHIC NOTES ON WATANJAR: THE MINISTER APPEARS YOUTHFUL, AND IS SHY AND SOFT-SPOKEN. HE SEEMED TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE IN A CIVILIAN SUIT, WEARING HIS COLLAR OPEN AND HIS TIE LOOSE. WATANJAR TOLD ME THAT HIS FATHER DIED WHEN HE WAS TWO YEARS OF AGE. ALTHOUGH HE GIVES THE INITIAL IMPRESSION OF BEING SHY, WATANJAR IS DIRECT AND OUTSPOKEN WHEN MAKING AN IMPORTANT POINT.

5. BIOGRAPHIC NOTES ON AHMAD: AHMAD IS A LARGE, FRIENDLY, GOOD-LOOKING MAN IN HIS MID-THIRTIES. A GRADUATE OF KABUL

UNIVERSITY'S FACULTY OF LAW, AHMAD PURSUED SOME POST-GRADUATE
LEGAL STUDIES IN THE U.S. IN 1966, PRIMARILY AT PHOENIX AND
TUCSON. DURING HIS STAY IN THE U.S., HE VISITED OVER THIRTY
STATES. HE APPEARS TO REMEMBER WITH GREAT PLEASURE HIS SOJOURN
IN AMERICA. AHMAD'S ENGLISH IS RUSTY, BUT SATISFACTORY.
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